crew informed the Police authorities in Thailand that the vessel was hijacked on 24th February, 2000 by about 20 masked and armed pirates.

The Coast Guard and the Navy; have, individually and jointly, been conducting regular patrolling of maritime zone to prevent incidents of theft/ robbery. There is no absolutely evidence whatsoever of their connivance with sea pirates.

Illegal Construction in Meerut cantonment Area

4727. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 333 given in the Rajya Sabha on 2nd December, 1998 and state:

(a) whether defence land comprising Survey No. 357/1751/2, known as 173-B Abulane, Merrut Cantt. is being sold in parts in violation of land policy of GOI and Rule 15 of Cantonment Land Administration Rules, 1937;

(b) whether large scale illegal construction has taken place on vacant land inconnivance with Merrut Cantt. Board Authorities;

(c) whether it is a fact that Board have mutated the names of illegal purchaser of such parts of land *vide* Resolution No. 264 dated 3rd October, 1996;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and corrective action taken thereon; and

(e) the justification for mutating the names of illegal purchasers?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) The land in question is an Old Grant property. The holders of occupancy rights of this land have sold parts of the land in the past without the permission of the Government.

(b) Certain unauthorised constructions had been carried out by the holders of occupancy rights of the aforementioned land as well as the purchasers of parts of the land. Action to stop/remove the unauthorised constructions was initiated by the Cantonment Board. However, the parties have approached various courts and the matter is subjudice. No connivance of the Cantt. Board staff in the unauthorised constructions has, however, come to notice.

(c) to (e) The mutation carried out by the Cantt. Board has not been accepted by the Government.